

Addiction and Consumption of Cyber Pornography Have Increased Risk Factors and Harmful Effects Among Emerging Adults

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Abstract

The internet has revolutionized the human lives globally, and internet access has become easier and more affordable than ever before. The rise of the internet has increased concerns on various cybercrimes, such as child pornography, revenge porn, deepfake pornography, and non-consensual content. Cyber pornography is the creation, distribution, and consumption of pornographic materials, such as obscene writings, pictures, photographs, text, audio, and movies through the internet. It is a fast growing environment due to the absence of any concrete law against it, and its triple-A nature, such as accessibility, affordability, and anonymity. Negative social issues, such as child abuse, violence against women, rape, relationships, family breakdown, inequality, youth crime, promiscuity, and sexually transmitted diseases may develop due to the addiction of cyber pornography. Cyber pornography is now one of the most burning issues in media all over the world. International community has been trying for the safety and welfare of women and children of the world by passing laws regulating international actions.

Keywords: cyber pornography, cyber sexual law, sexual violence, pornography addiction, sex addiction

1. Introduction

At present the internet is an essential part of cultural, commercial, educational, global communication system, and social media. It is also used by the global community for the entertainment. The legitimate purpose of internet is to benefit and empower online users, while lowering the barriers to the creation and the distribution of expressions throughout the world (Ho, 2003). Increased cyberspace has become haven for the cyber criminals, and online pornography has increased alarmingly with the rise of cyberspace due to easy accessibility and anonymity, and it becomes a very sensitive issue (Angel et al., 2018). Cyber pornography has made sexually explicit materials more accessible to all level of people than ever before (Brown & L'Engle, 2009). Women and children are highly vulnerable to cybercrime, and have become victimization of easily for sexual exploitation through internet (Chitra & Basavaraju, 2019). Generally, children and young people are exposed to cyber pornography either deliberately or accidentally due to curiosity or interest in information about sexual and reproductive health or relations and a drive for sexual motivation (Flood, 2007).

When sexually suggestive materials, such as writings, pictures, photographs, text, audio, movies portraying sexual activity, stimulating behavior in a way that is premeditated to awaken sexual anticipation among people in digital environments is known as cyber pornography (Som et al., 2022). The cyber pornography is accessible over the internet through the websites, file transfer protocol (FTP) connections, peer-to-peer file sharing, and Usenet newsgroups. It also includes pornographic websites, online pornographic magazines, uploading, downloading, and transmitting pornographic materials unlawfully (Joshi, 2021). It increases child sexual abuse, rape, violence against women, family breakdown, crime among youth, sexually transmitted diseases, and other related criminal activities in the society. It is a punishable offence under criminal law (Golder et al., 2017). Rapid

surge in the usage of cyber pornography is promoting a severe negative impact on health and well-being throughout the world. The production and consumption of cyber pornography have increased alarmingly that result in functioning psychological problems (Vinnakota et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review

A literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area. It is a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis (Green et al., 2006). It discusses published information in a particular subject area within a certain time period, and tries to identify the gaps in the existing knowledge (Dellinger, 2005). It is written occasionally in the humanities, but mostly in the natural sciences and social sciences. It is often a part of a project, dissertation, and a journal article (Galvan, 2015). It attempts to synthesize and evaluate the material and information according to the research question, thesis, and central theme. The main types of literature reviews are evaluative, exploratory, instrumental, and systematic. A good literature review summarizes, analyzes, evaluates, and synthesizes the relevant literature within a particular field of research (Cooper, 1998).

Md. Razwan Hasan Khan Chowdhury and his coauthors have examined the correlations between online pornography addiction and socio-behavioral factors, such as socializing habits, nature of interactions, university attendance and study focus, sleeping habits, and consumption of main meals. They have suggested that it is necessary to provide pornography addiction education programs to educate students about the adverse effects of pornography. Furthermore, targeted treatment programs for sexual addiction, sexual abuse, and pornography abuse are needed to support the individuals who are addicted to pornography (Chowdhury et al., 2018). Komal Razzaq and Muhammad Rafiq have explored psychosocial, social, and mental health issues of adults viewing pornography on the internet that will help the psychologists in establishing management strategies like to overcome the adult issues regarding internet pornography (Razzaq & Rafiq, 2019). Verly Poerbaning Astika and his coauthors have aimed to determine and analyze law enforcement efforts against cyber pornography in Indonesia, where the data are collected through literature study, interviews, and documentation (Astika et al., 2018).

Hesti Septianita and Synthiana Rachmie have tried to propose a notion on new category of transnational organized crime that is cyber child pornography by analyzing the elements of crime of transnational online child pornography. An immediate action by promulgating an international legal instrument in effect should be taken by considering the severity of the crime against the children's future life (Septianita & Rachmie, 2024). David P. Fernandez and Mark D. Griffiths have presented systematic review to i) identify psychometric tools that have been developed to assess problematic pornography use, ii) summarize key characteristics, psychometric properties and strengths and limitations of instruments for problematic pornography use, iii) compare the instruments' theoretical conceptualizations of problematic pornography use, and iv) evaluate each instrument on their ability to assess various core components of addiction. Five of the most commonly assessed addiction components across the different instruments are i) impaired control, ii) salience, iii) mood modification, iv) interpersonal conflict, and v) general life conflict (Fernandez & Griffiths, 2019).

3. Research Methodology of the Study

Research is searching for knowledge and searching for truth. It is a systematic, organized, and creative process of inquiry to discover new knowledge, answer questions, and expand understanding of a topic. It is the systematic investigation of materials and sources to establish facts and reach new conclusions (Groh, 2018). There are three major types of empirical research: qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods research (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to gather and analyze non-numerical data in order to gain an understanding of individuals' social reality, including understanding their attitudes, beliefs, and motivation (King et al., 2021). It focuses on experiences, perceptions, and social phenomena that seeks to understand the "how" and "why" behind human behavior and interactions (Grover, 2015). Quantitative research focuses on quantifying the collection and analysis of data that involves systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships, by asking a narrow question and collecting numerical data to analyze it utilizing statistical methods (Creswell, 2008). This methodology uses tools, such as surveys, experiments, and polls to test hypotheses and examine specific variables. Fields like sociology, psychology, healthcare, education, and marketing frequently use quantitative research to identify patterns, validate theories, and make predictions based on statistical evidence (Muijs, 2010). It is formed from a deductive approach where emphasis is placed on the testing of theory, shaped by empiricist and positivist philosophies (Bryman, 2012). Mixed methods research blends qualitative and quantitative approaches to offer a more comprehensive understanding with strengths than either method alone through the minimizing their weaknesses (Sharma et al., 2023). It allows the researchers to use qualitative data to interpret quantitative results and test hypotheses generated from qualitative exploration (Shorten & Smith, 2017).

Methodology is a system of methods used in a particular area that encompasses the overall strategy, specific data

collection methods, and the procedures for data analysis (Howell, 2013). It refers to the methods themselves or to the philosophical discussion of associated background assumptions. It focuses on the overall strategy and rationale, while methods are the specific tools, such as surveys, experiments, etc. (Babbie, 2010). Research methodology is the systematic framework of methods, procedures, and techniques a researcher uses to design and conduct a study to answer a research question (Soeters et al., 2014). It is a process by which researchers design their study so that they can achieve their objectives using the selected research instruments. It includes research design, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and the overall framework within which the research is conducted (Andiappan & Wan, 2020). In this review study we have tried to discuss basic concept of cyber pornography for the new readers. Then we have discussed types of cyber pornography, such as child pornography, revenge porn, and deepfake pornography. Finally, the effects and laws of cyber pornography are discussed very briefly.

4. Objective of the Study

World-class English sociologist Anthony Giddens has described that the late-modern world as one in which personal life as well as intimate relationships have become open and self-reflexive projects that involve everyday social experiments by the individual (Giddens, 2013). Cyber pornography indicates the creation, distribution, and access of sexually explicit content using digital platforms, such as websites, social media, emails, and mobile applications (Hald & Mulya, 2013). The “Triple A Engine” of accessibility, affordability and anonymity factors the internet possess that make accessing pornography online particularly convenient (Cooper, 1998). At present cyber pornography has become a big industry. Many competing pornography sites reduce pricing, even as much as to offer free pornography (Carroll et al. 2008). The largest pornography site on the internet PornHub has reported that more than 42 billion people worldwide visit cyber pornography website (Pornhub.com, 2025). Main objective of this study is to discuss the production and consumption of cyber pornography. Some other minor objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) basic concept and types of cyber pornography,
- 2) effects of cyber pornography, and
- 3) cyber laws for pornography.

5. Basic Concept of Cyber Pornography

The term “cyber” was coined by American speculative fiction writer William Gibson in his 1984 fictional novel “Neuromancer” that is used as a prefix to the worldwide field of electronic communication. On the other hand, crime is an action that is punishable by law (Giacomini & Zaidi, 2012). The term “porne” refers to “indecent sexual stuff” which means prostitute, and ‘graphein’ means write or record; and the term “pornography” comes from the Greek letter “pornographos” literally meaning writing about prostitutes that signifies to movies on all kinds of sexual activities outside the bonds of marriage (Vithayathil, 2021).

Sexual attraction is inborn in humans, and sexual desire remaining the primary driver of reproductive health. Both men and women enjoy a balanced sex life (Vinnakota et al., 2021). Developing, distributing, and propagating the films designed to be sexually exciting over the internet is termed as cyber pornography. The cyber pornography also transmits obscene pornographic pictures, photos, writings, etc. It is extensively produced, distributed, and used around the world as a medium of entertainment mainly for men (Abell et al., 2006). It is produced through coercion, seduction, coaxing, photographed covertly, and violently. It is done by online solicitation, the exchange of gifts, and promises of romance (Wolak, 2012).

At present cyber pornography has become a big industry and the size is about \$100 billion per year, and also becomes the threat to the internet users all over the world (Grubbs et al., 2010). American nude model Danni Ashe has started an online pornographic website named Danni’s Hard Drive in 1995 that is considered as the earliest cyber pornography. Now cyber pornography is produced and distributed many countries of the world. It is open in some countries, restricted in some countries, and banned in some countries (Fritz et al., 2022).

6. Types of Cyber Pornography

Production, distribution, and consumption of cyber pornography are considered as criminal offense worldwide. Some common types of cyber pornography are child pornography, revenge porn, deepfake pornography, forced pornography, and obscene and morally offensive content (Hald & Malamuth, 2008). These are spread through the pornographic websites, online pornographic magazines, uploading, downloading, and transmitting pornographic materials unlawfully. Normally females are victimized through the humiliation and embarrassment by the posting of pornographic images, pictures, and videos (Schuz, 2014).

6.1 Child Cyber Pornography

Sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography are considered as the child sexual abuse, whose obscene materials come in many forms, such as photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings,

movies, videotapes, and computer disks (UNODC, 2015). Cyber child pornography is a global cybercrime against the most vulnerable populations that is increasing in the present society alarmingly due to easy accessibility, affordability, and anonymity (De Jong & Cook, 2021). It is an erotic material that depicts persons under the designated age of majority that varies by criminal jurisdiction. There is no consensus in international law regarding the precise meaning of child pornography (Gillespie, 2018). The materials that are harmful to child and obscene cannot host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update, and share; these violate cyber security law (Flood, 2009). Sometimes pornographic pictures of minors are produced by children and teenagers themselves without the involvement of an adult. Child pornography is illegal and censored in most jurisdictions in the world (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

Cyber child pornography has been causing harm to children for centuries, and it is not just one offence, rather it is a series of offences and harsh consequences (Bhadury, 2022). The United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) took vital initiatives to combat cyber sexual abuse, child pornography, and pedophilia; and took initiatives to adopt uniform preventive and controlling measures especially on 18-19 January, 1999 at Paris with 150 participants (Verma, 2012). In 2001, the European Council's Committee on Crime Problems and Cyber Crimes adopted the draft convention with the initiatives of 41 nations that deals with the content related offences, and try to prohibit child pornography and cyber pornography (UNODC, 2010). In 2006, the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) published a report of findings on the presence of child pornography legislation in the then-184 INTERPOL member countries, and later updated this to include 196 UN member countries. Among 196 UN member countries, only 69 countries had legislation needed to deal with child pornography offenses, while 53 did not have any legislation specifically addressing the problem (Schuz, 2014). It is a punishable crime of producing, distributing, disseminating, importing, exporting, offering, selling, and possessing of child pornography (Akdeniz, 2013).

6.2 Revenge Porn

Revenge porn is a type of digital abuse by a perpetrator that distributes sexually explicit photos or videos of an ex-partner from a previous romantic relationship without victim's consent, with the punitive intention to create public humiliation out of revenge against the victim (Starr & Lavis, 2018). It is a form of ongoing relationship abuse and control. It is typically done to extort money from the victim and for blackmail. It is a relatively new phenomenon that has grown substantially in the past few years (Bates, 2015). It is particularly harmful for women due to the stigma attached to naked photos that create patriarchal values of purity, modesty, and conservatism of the women (Citron & Franks, 2014). About 18.3% of women did not know that they were victims of revenge porn. Revenge porn materials can reach to the number of viewers in seconds in the era of booming internet, and can create huge impact on the victim (Mohammed et al., 2023).

Alyse Dickson has pointed that "revenge pornography" is a media-generated term that is used to describe the non-consensual distribution of nude, sexual or sexually explicit images in the digital era (Dickson, 2016). Sometimes psychoactive chemicals, such as date rape drugs are used to reduce sense and for the involvement in the sexual act (Bloom, 2014). Revenge porn is often a form of domestic violence and mostly common among criminal gangs and it is used for revenge or harassment. It has been linked to negative mental health outcomes among victims, such as trust issues, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, elevated fear, and loss of confidence and self-esteem (Bates, 2017). Many revenge porn victims face difficulties in their present and future employment, as they can be fired from their jobs. At present there is no specific law against revenge porn (Matsui, 2015).

6.3 Deepfake Pornography

Deepfake is a blend of the words "deep learning" and "fake" that describes the hyper-realistic digital falsification of images, video, and audio. Deepfake pornography is a type of synthetic pornography that is created via altering already-existing photographs and videos by applying deepfake technology to the images of the participants, and overwhelmingly the targeted women (Alanazi et al., 2025). The technology is getting easier to use and accessible to everyone, and about 96% of deepfakes available online are pornographic, and 99% targets women. It is a new means of degrading, humiliating, harassing and abusing women, and the vast majority of deepfake porn is created by men (Toparlak, 2022). The term "deepfake" was coined in 2017 on an American proprietary social news aggregation and forum social media platform, Reddit forum where users shared altered pornographic videos created using machine learning algorithms, computer vision techniques, and artificial intelligence (AI) software, where "fake" meaning the videos are not real, and since then the phenomenon of deepfakes has developed rapidly, both in terms of technological sophistication and societal impact that affects our perception of the world (Gaur & Arora, 2022). Total number of deepfake videos online is 14,678 that views across top four dedicated deepfake pornography websites is 134,364,438 (Ajder et al., 2019).

This phenomenon is a new form of misogynistic gender-based violence. It has complex social, legal, and ethical implications, particularly related to privacy violations, sexual exploitation, and legal vulnerabilities. The

deepfake sexual materials are developing rapidly that can edit images to remove an individual's clothes and create fake nude images (Delfino, 2019). These are often created using tools and artificial intelligence (AI) that can flawlessly blend the facial features of unsuspecting individuals onto explicit images or videos, and can make it difficult to detect editing and manipulation (Safi et al., 2024). These are most often created and distributed without the consent of the individual depicted, and can be used to humiliate, extort, silence an individual, and for sexual gratification. Women, girls, gender diverse people, persons with disability, and First Nations peoples are disproportionately targeted by such content. Sometimes politicians and celebrities are targeted to deepfake pornography (McGlynn, 2024). In 2017, the first deepfake pornographic video of famous Israeli actress Gal Gadot was created by a Reddit user that is quickly spread online (Powell et al., 2024). Lawmakers around the world are turning their attention to deepfake sexual abuse to reduce its prevalence and provide redress to victims (McGlynn & Toparlak, 2025).

7. Effects of Cyber Pornography

Frequent and increased consumption of cyber pornography may addict to pornography develops over time that is a chronic and relapsing condition due to anonymity, accessibility, and affordability of the internet pornography (Joshi, 2021). The cyber pornography can create both positive and negative social issues; where positive effects are increasing of sexual knowledge and improving of sex life; and negative effects are unrealistic sexual expectations, develop of sexual impulsivity, rape, compulsive sexual behavior, hypersexual disorder, child abuse, violence against women, inequality, relationship problems, family breakdown, youth crime, promiscuity, addiction of gambling, and sexually transmitted diseases (Verma, 2012).

Sometimes it can develop an adverse impact on family life, marriage, sexual risk-taking behaviors, and values of an individual. As a result, pornography addiction can isolate a person from his family, coworkers, and the broader community (Chowdhury et al., 2018). Pornography addiction is sexual dysfunction, where males are more likely than females viewing pornography repeatedly either alone or in same-sex group (Cameron et al., 2005). In the USA, 79% of males and 76% of females watched online pornography; among them 58% are college students. When young adults are becoming addicted to cyber pornography, some of them become addicted to gambling, drugs, and alcohol (Diamond, 2009).

8. Cyber Law for Pornography

Cyber pornography should be in the form of enticement, unlawful soliciting, and illegally exposing of a minor to sexually explicit behavior. It has become one of the most complicated issues in law enforcement due to its massive spread, and its difficulties to handle; and it has become a challenge for law enforcers to eradicate it (Abimbola, 2017). Three general types of cyber pornography offenders are i) the dabbler, ii) the preferential offender, and iii) the miscellaneous offender. They use computers and other electronic devices to view, store, produce, send, receive, and distribute child and other forms of pornography; to communicate, groom, and entice children and others for victimization; and to validate and communicate with other sex offenders (Bowker & Gray, 2004).

At present there is no global cyber law that can be applied in every country for the punishment of cyber criminals. Dabblers are curious adults with a newly found access to pornography who are profit-motivated to deal in child pornography (Fatima & Husain, 2020). The preferential offenders are the sexually indiscriminate individuals with a wide variety of deviant sexual interest preference for children. The miscellaneous offenders are misguided individuals conducting private investigations who have been found in possession of child pornography (Astika et al., 2018). Due to the global accessibility, jurisdiction problem, differences in standard of morality and law in different countries, the enforcement of law has become impossible. The enforcement of law on cyber pornography has become impossible due to the global accessibility, jurisdiction problem, differences in standard of morality and law in different countries (Duffy et al., 2016).

9. Conclusions

At present the internet becomes the key component of global communications and information infrastructure in our daily lives. Therefore, exploitation and suppression of women and children through internet are increasing. Cyber pornography involves obscenity, child exploitation, and unauthorized distribution that can lead to severe legal consequences. It is affecting the lives of all levels of people of the society. Governments, law enforcement, and individuals must work together to create a safer digital space and prevent cyber exploitation. Also, these organizations must arrange the treatment programs for sexual addiction, sexual abuse, and pornography abuse for the individuals who are addicted to cyber pornography. These organizations must ensure an open, safe, trusted, and accountable internet for all its users worldwide.

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